

The Influence of Interpersonal Conflict on the Organizational Performance in Public Financial Sector of Yemen

Mohammed Aboaoga^{a*}, Ibrahim Mohamed^b, Mohd Juzaidin Ab Aziz^c

^{a,b}Center for Software Technology and Management (SOFTAM), University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)

^cCenter for Artificial Intelligence Technology (CAIT), University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)

^aEmail: abuauja@siswa.ukm.edu.my, ^bEmail: ibrahim@ukm.edu.my, ^cEmail: juzaidin@ukm.edu.my

Abstract

Organizational performance has become an increasingly important issue due to its relation to the strategic goals of an organization, customer satisfaction and economic contributions. The interpersonal conflict is a critical dimension which can greatly influence performance in a competitive environment such as the financial sector. This study investigated the influence of interpersonal conflict on organizational performance in the financial sector, Yemen. The study employed a quantitative method which consists of the following steps: survey design, data collection and data analysis. A sample size comprising 120 employees were distributed in Ministry of Finance. Questionnaires were used to collect data from this sample. Data analysis (reliability, validity, correlation and factor analysis) has been carried out using SPSS. In addition, structural equation modelling (SEM) has been used for evaluation the research model. Based on the experimental results, the findings in this study revealed that the interpersonal factors (interference, disagreement and instability) significantly negatively (at 0.05 level of significance) influence organizational performance. Moreover, interdependence did not have any significant influence on organizational performance.

Keywords: Organizational Performance; Interference; Disagreement; Instability; Public Financial Sector.

* Corresponding author.

1. Introduction

Organizational performance (OP) has become an increasingly important issue due to its relation to the strategic goals of an organization, customer satisfaction and economic contributions. It refers to the task of organizing the actual output or results of a given organization by measuring such results in comparison to the organization's intended objectives [1, 2]. In other words, OP is seen as measuring how stakeholders make a use of available resources of the organization in accomplishing the goals of the organization and meeting or achieving their needs in an effective and efficient way [3].

There are many organizations in the recent years that have tried to manage the performance of the organizations depending on scorecard methodology as it allows tracking and measuring the performance through multiple dimensions. These multiple dimensions include customer service, financial performance, social responsibility, and employee stewardship in order to improve productivity, reduce cost and improve the effectiveness of the mission. In literature, several factors such as technological, organizational and personal factors have been investigated on the organization performance by number of researches. Some researchers focus on the effect of interpersonal conflict on the organizational performance. As the interpersonal conflict can be perceived as both constructive and destructive, it would be necessary to identify and determine its factors which reduce and eliminate its bad effects on organizations especially in public financial sector.

In this paper, we investigate the influence of the interpersonal conflict on the organizational performance in the public financial sector. The main reason behind this is that organizational performance in public sector still poor and it is questionable till today due to the service provided by public sector [4, 5]. Thus, firstly, we identify the interpersonal conflict factors which can influence the organizational performance in public financial sector. Then, the research model is proposed to formulate the relationship between these factors and the organizational performance. After that, the quantitative method is used.

2. Review of literature review

The public sector refers to public organizations which are primarily funded and controlled by government. The public sector encompasses basic services such as primary education, public roads, public transit, public health and various social services as in the majority of countries worldwide. Although such public sectors are different in many respects, they still have shared features characterizing them as formal organizations. In other words, they are set up for a shared purpose which is achieving collective interests and special tasks, and they shared relatively stable patterns of behavior, resources and rewards associated to their activities [6]. Compared to other sectors, OP becomes more important in financial sector because the financial services have to more efficient and effective.

The improving organizational performance has always been an ambitious goal to the top management in private and public sector. Thus, there are several schemes have been introduced to produce more efficient and effective organizations in the private sectors and to strengthen the performance. Therefore, these

schemes may also be applicable to many public sector organizations [7, 8].

Generally speaking, as human beings, no one will be exempted from being experienced or exposed to any type of conflict on his/her daily routine on the level of interpersonal or intrapersonal level. As human we live with all or some types of these aspects of conflicts because our experience is in the context or in the world that always shared by others even if we decided to draw from the society, we still had the same feelings. On the beginning of his book that address the interpersonal conflict, Dixon [9] emphasized on this view as “(Even if we withdraw from society, we still stand in relation to that from which we are apart” [10]. According to him, the interpersonal conflict can be viewed as many series of challenges within the “existential givens” that come as results of seemingly opposing views of ‘truth’, subjective truths, each held passionately, each defended vigorously. That means personal conflict is an unavoidable parts of human association moreover some theorists consider it as a necessary need surrounding our daily routine. What is important here is to determine the factors creating this issue and how people react to it and employ certain styles to avoid, reduce or make an end for different conflict situations.

In general, social and organizational life is inventively prone to conflicts, and therefore, as reported in some previous studies, more than 20% of managers’ time is spent in tackling conflicts [11-13]. Moreover, higher levels of organizational conflict are resulted from the growing organizational interdependencies, the change to collaborative project-based structures, higher diversity, and heightened environmental uncertainty [11, 14, 15]. Being much broad, conflict can vary from interpersonal to national level. However, in this study, conflict is restricted to the interpersonal level.

Interpersonal conflict (IPC) is recognized as an important concept due to its relation to creation of an Organizational Conflict (OC). Being unavoidable in a given organizations, IPC negatively affects both individuals and the organization if it is not managed properly [16, 17]. Moreover, IPC when occurring in a given organization is time consuming for managers of all levels [18]. Hence, it has negative consequences on the organization, including unachieved goals, time and effort loss as well as low quality of work [19].

Besides, one negative impact of conflict is the poor or deteriorated organizational performance. Therefore, to overcome such issues and obtain positive results, conflict should be properly managed in an organization [20, 21]. Yet, conflict does not always negatively affect the organization, but it can also positively affect it, thus improving its performance and accelerating its productivity [22, 23]. Thus, in the case of higher conflict, organizational performance may decline or become poor, while in the case of low conflict, it is possible to become better [24]. It is also probable that conflict has destructive and negative impact on organizational performance [25]. Identifying the IPC factors is regarded one of the important research topic which is the focus of the study reported in this paper. This is because such factors enrich our understanding of the process of conflict.

In a nutshell, the concept of Interpersonal conflict as an event that occurs between –at least- two individuals in the course of interactions due to the contradictions of values, goals, expectations and perception of personal differences. Conflict either intrapsychic or interpersonal should not be understood as a destructive

issue for organizations because it is an inevitable part of human association and, to some extent, a necessary one [26]. Thus the most significant issue is to determine and investigate how conflict can be reduced and eliminated and its effects on organizations. Hence the following section will tackle how researchers tried to determine and resolved the interpersonal conflict in organizations.

3. Proposed Model

This section introduces the research model which forms the relation between interpersonal conflict and the organizational performance. The factors in this model are presented in the following sub-sections.

3.1 Interpersonal conflict

Conflict is an inevitable part of an organizations life since the environment of financial sector has a number of distinctive features that may add to the development of conflict situations. These include the triadic relationship that exists between management, staff, and financial process, causing stress and pressure for the users. The level of interdependence between departments in many situations are necessarily high if the user is to receive a satisfactory service, thus increasing the tendency of occurrence of conflict [27].

Interpersonal conflict can be regarded as a dispute that occurs when interests, goals or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible with each other [28]. This results into a situation whereby they frustrate each other in an attempt to achieve their objectives. Conflict arises in groups because of the scarcity of freedom, position, and resources. People who value independence tend to resist the need for interdependence and, to some extent, conformity within a group. People who seek power therefore struggle with others for position or status within the group. Conflict is a part of organizational life and may occur between individuals, between the individual and the group, and between groups [29].

The investigated in this study, which are the bases for formulating a proposed framework, are the most appropriate and relevant to the interpersonal conflict factors and definitions obtained from the literature. Many experiments [14, 30, 31] have been conducted to investigate the relation between interpersonal conflict and organizational performance. Researchers in previous related studies identified and recognized three factors of interpersonal conflict (IPC). These factors are interdependence, interference, disagreement [32]. Furthermore, according to Elmagri [33] instability considered factor representing the causal factors of interpersonal conflict. The following section will discuss these factors.

I. Interdependence (ID)

Interdependence refers to the extent to which different employees depend on each other to accomplish their tasks [32], Sørebo and his colleagues [34]. have proposed that interdependence has a negative influence on perceived usefulness and user satisfaction through negative emotions. The absence of interdependence of one party may result on the zero actions of impact on the outcomes of the other party. According to Barki and Hartwick [32] interdependence represents the core structural pre-condition of any conflict situation, providing an interpersonal context in which conflicts may occur. In addition, Hotepo and his colleagues [35]

found interdependence as factor that has caused conflicts in the service industry.

II. Interference (IF)

Interference is one of the key factors of causal interpersonal conflict, which is related to the existence of interference between users in terms of their tasks, objects, and goals [32]. That means, it resulted in behavioral attributes. Researchers believe that the central role of interpersonal conflict is the behavior where one or more disputants oppose their counterpart's interests or goals [15]. According to Robbins [36] pointed out there is need to pay attention to causes of interpersonal conflict in order to improve organization performance. In this study, disagreement refers the difference among employees in terms of their values, needs, interests, opinions, and goals in organization which will be examined as the factor of the conflict and its impact on organizational performance.

III. Disagreement (DA)

Disagreement refers to the difference of values, needs, interests, opinions, goals, or objectives among employees [32]. It considered the key causal factors of interpersonal conflict that impact on the outcome. In this research, disagreement refers the varieties among employees in terms of their values, needs, interests, opinions, and goals in organization which will be examined as the construct of the conflict and its impact on organizational performance. According to Rollinson [37], Wood and his colleagues [38] found that the disagreement factor has a strong negative influence on the outcomes of organization (organization performance).

IV. Instability (IST)

Instability is defined as the state of doubt caused by the possibility of a sudden change in the current situation [33]. In the literature there are several kinds of instability such as organizational, administrative, requirement, political and economic. For instance the relationship between political instability and organizational performance is becoming more complex to organizations [39]. In this research, instability refers to the continuous changes in the authorizations, procedures and tasks by senior and direct management. Instability is one of causal factors of the conflict which impact on the performance of organizations. In addition, Peterson [40] pointed out that increased personnel stability leads to increased effectiveness of the organization.

3.2 Organizational performance (OP)

Organizational performance is one of the most important constructs in achieving the goals of the organization [41]. The term of organizational performance (OP) refers to the task of organizing the actual output or results of a given organization by measuring such results in comparison to the organization's intended objectives. OP is seen as measuring how stakeholders make a use of available resources of the organization in accomplishing the goals of the organization and meeting or achieving their needs in an effective and efficient way [3]. Previous research showed that OP results into a high level of satisfaction

which can be the basis for productivity and enhancement of the efficiency, which in turns, can be of attractions of new talent and a means to rewarding it.

4. Research Hypotheses

In this research the hypotheses have been formulated based on the literature review. In general there are several studies which pointed out that there is a negative relationship between the interpersonal conflict and organizational performance. More specifically [32, 42] concluded that interpersonal conflict factors (interdependence, interference and disagreement) have a negative influence on organizational performance. In addition, Elmagri [33] stated that the instability is one of important factor which effect on organizational performance. Based on the previous desiccation, this study proposes the following hypotheses.

H1: The interdependence of interpersonal conflict has a negatively significantly influence organizational performance.

H2: The interference of interpersonal conflict has a negatively significantly influence organizational performance.

H3: The disagreement of interpersonal conflict has a negatively significantly influence organizational performance.

H4: The instability of interpersonal conflict has a negatively significantly influence organizational performance.

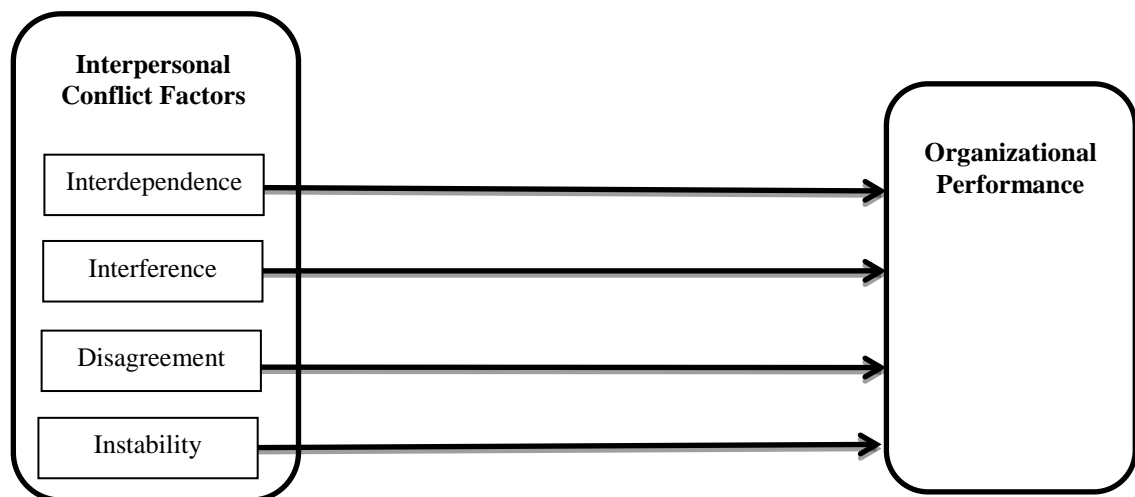


Figure 1: Proposed model

5. Research method

The study adopted survey research method. Firstly, the questionnaire has been designed based on the previous studies [32]. The questionnaire has been translated to Arabic as the target sample is the employees

in Yemen. It validated by experts to avoid any ambiguity. The measurements were based on a five point Likert scale, the rating range from totally disagree, disagree, indecisive, agree, to totally agree. A sample size comprising 500 employees were selected from four financial organizations using stratified random sampling. Questionnaires were used to collect data which was validated through a pilot test while reliability was measured using the Cronbach's Alpha. Finally, SPSS and structural equation modelling (SEM) were used for data analysis and evaluation of the research model.

6. Results

In this section we present the experimental results that have been obtained from data collection processes. To measure reliability, we used the Cronbach's Alpha which is the metric returns value between 0 (very low reliability) to 1 (very high reliability). On other hand, we used the kaiser meyer olkin (KMO) to check the validity. Table 1 shows the result of reliability and validity.

Table 1: Reliability and Validity Test Results Using Cronbach's alpha and KMO

Item	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha	KMO
ID	4	.810	.738
IF	6	.960	.916
DA	5	.869	.800
IST	5	.925	.885
OP	5	.949	.883

The correlation coefficient is a metric which measures the relationship between two lists of variables. . In this study, the goals of the correlation analysis are to measure the relationship between the independent and dependent factors, and the relationship among the independent factors. Table 2 shows the correlation analysis result between independent and dependent factors.

Table 2: The correlation analysis between independent and dependent factors

	IDIFC	DSG	ISTB	OP
ID Pearson Correlation	1	.265**	.323**	.240**
IF Pearson Correlation		1	.544**	.658**
DS Pearson Correlation			1	.439**
IST Pearson Correlation				1
OP Pearson Correlation				

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is technique used to assess each construct in the model and employing AMOS version 22. CFA Results was performed on the measurement model include five factors, which were interdependent (ID), interference (IF), disagreement (DS) and instability (ISB). Figure 2 shows CFA model derived from EFA. In initial CFA 25 items were used which were derived from the EFA .In addition Figure 3 shows the final CFA model after deleting these problematic items. Based on the result of goodness of fit indices of the initial run of CFA were within the recommended level, but there are two items

ID1, DS1 with low factor loading less than 0.50. Hair and his colleagues [43] pointed out the size and factor loading value should take in consideration. Other researcher Awang [44] suggested deleted the items which have loading value less than 0.60. Thus, the problematic items deleted after that, the measurement model was re-run.

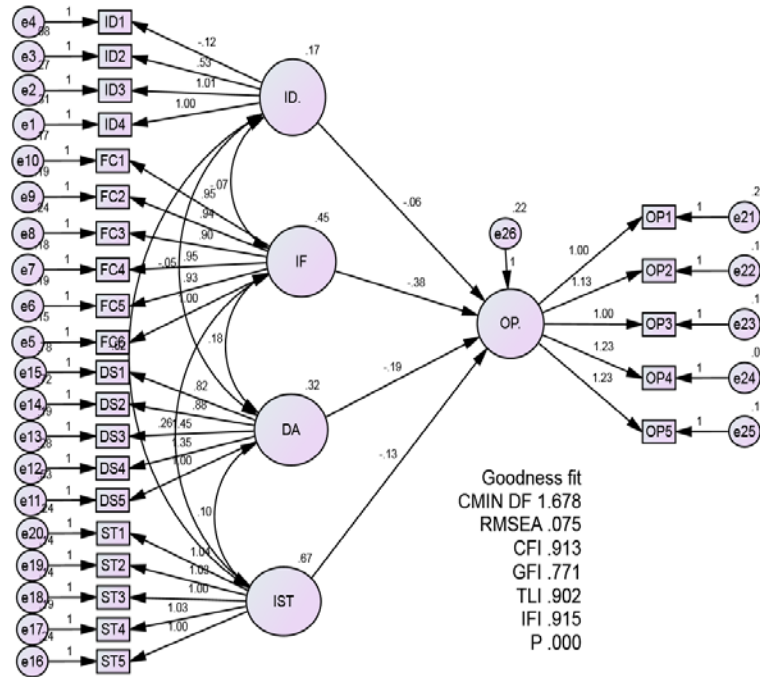


Figure 2: Initial CFA

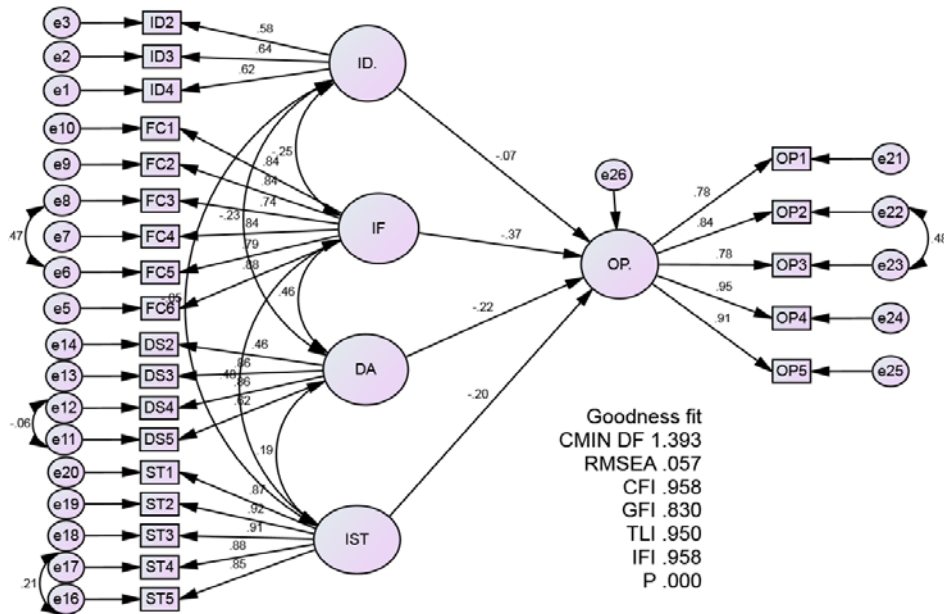


Figure 3: Final CFA

Figure 2 shown that the model did not fit well based on GOF indexes, because, the RMSEA was high and GFI was below .80. This indicate that the goodness of fit indices of the initial run of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) were not within the required level. On the other hand, Figure 3 shown the final CFA model was fit well based on GOF indexes. The RMSEA was less than 0.80 and the ChiSq/df <3, and CFI, GFI were above 0.80, and TLI, IFI were above 0.90. Thus, all GOF indexes were consistent with the required level.

Table 3: Result of Hypotheses Testing

		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P.Value	Result
OP.	<--- ID.	-.095	.143	-.666	.506	Rejected
OP.	<--- IF	-.325	.100	-3.251	.001	Supported
OP.	<--- DA	-.225	.104	-2.149	.032	Supported
OP.	<--- IST	-.144	.069	-2.096	.036	Supported

7. Discussion

Table 1 mentioned above, shows the values of Cronbach's Alpha for each construct. In this research the value of Cronbach's alpha above 0.80 is acceptable and high level. According to Hinton and his colleagues [45] there are four different levels of reliability: an excellent level (0.90 and above), a high level (0.70 to 0.90), a moderate level (between 0.50 and 0.70) and a low level (0.50 and below). From the same table, the value of KMO was classified between 0.738 and 0.916. In the same table 1 shows the values of KMO for each construct above 0.70. Hair and his colleagues [43] pointed out that, the KMO value with 0.90 is excellent; 0.80 is good; 0.70 is middling; 0.60 is mediocre and 0.50 is acceptable.

The results of the analysis presented in Table 3 indicate that there is a significantly correlations among the constructs of the study. The table also provides the Pearson's correlations with a two tailed significance test. The correlation analysis was employed for testing the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variables. The results revealed that the instability (IST) and organizational performance had the highest correlation value. Table 3 shows the results of the path analysis that three hypotheses are significant (level < 0.05). H2: path from IF to OP and H3: path from DA to OP and H4: path from IST to OP. A first hypothesis was insignificant (level > 0.05) and rejected. This is due to lack of dependability among employees at work in public financial sector. The empirical research findings in this study indicate that there are negative and direct relationship between interpersonal conflict factors and organizational performance. This findings of this study are consistent with the previous studies [30, 32].

8. Conclusion

In this study we establish a model which investigated influence of interpersonal conflict on organizational performance. Interpersonal conflict has been measured using four factors (interdependence, interference, disagreement and instability).

The empirical results revealed that interpersonal conflict factors have negative effect on organizational performance in public financial sector in Yemen. This effect was statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significant. The finding of this study can be regarded as a fundamental for future strategies in improving an organizational performance in the public sector of Yemen. In addition, it is also important for avoiding interpersonal conflict that leads to the weak of organizational performance.

9. Limitations and Recommendations

The current study has restriction that need to be addressed for future researchers. The data collection is collected from small area due to the lack of and the current conflicts in Yemen, it was difficult to collect the data from all the cities in Yemen. So data collection was exclusive to the key organizations located in the capital city of Yemen, Sana'a. Therefore, future studies should attempt to gather more data on this research topic from more cities of the country in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors of the interpersonal conflict in this population.

This study was conducted to investigate the impact of interpersonal conflict factors on the organizational performance in the public financial organizations, it is highly recommended that similar studies should conducted to examine the applicability of the findings of this study to other types of organizations. Regarding the interpersonal conflict factors, the proposed model can be extended by future researchers using additional factors based on the environmental changes from one organization to another when measuring the information culture and interpersonal conflict constructs.

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